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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, SHUM, ID, PO, US
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE REACTION TO CONGRESSIONAL LETTER
ON TIMOR AND SECSTATE VISIT TO JAKARTA

1. (LOU) THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PORTUGUESE MEDIA INTEREST IN THE RECENT CONGRESSIONAL LETTER ON EAST TIMOR AND THE SECRETARY'S JULY 11 MEETING WITH INDONESIAN FONMIN MOCHTAR. NATIONAL TELEVISION NEWS REPORTED ON JULY 10 THAT THE GOP WOULD NOT COMMENT ON THE CONGRESSIONAL LETTER, AND ON JULY 11 THAT THE GOP IS "FOLLOWING WITH INTEREST" THE MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND FONMIN MOCHTAR.

2. (U) THE COMMUNIST-LINE "DIARIO DE LISBOA" REPORTED ON JULY 12 THAT ABILIO ARAUJO, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF FRETELIN IN LISBON, CONSIDERED THE SECRETARY'S RAISING THE EAST TIMOR HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN JAKARTA A VICTORY FOR FRETELIN. ARAUJO ADDED THAT "A GROWING NUMBER OF AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN IS WORRIED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR."

3. (U) ON JULY 13 THE RESPECTED INDEPENDENT DAILY "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL URGING THE GOP TO UNDERTAKE RENEWED DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY ON EAST TIMOR, TO INTENSIFY ITS DIALOGUE WITH INDONESIA, AND TO DETERMINE IF AMERICAN INTENTIONS REFLECT A GENUINE CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OR JUST AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN GESTURE. "IT IS NOT YET THE ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON WHICH CONDEMNS THE JAKARTA GOVERNMENT," THE PAPER SAID, "BUT IT MAY WELL BE THE FIRST STEP TO THE UNITED STATES' BEGINNING TO DEDICATE TO EAST TIMOR ATTENTION WHICH IS AT LEAST THE SAME AS THAT WHICH HUMAN RIGHTS OFFENSES MERIT IN OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD." THE PAPER ALSO CHASTISED THE WEST AS "HYPOCRITICAL" AND THE UNITED STATES AS "THE PRIVILEGED INTERLOCUTOR AND TUTOR OF THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT."

4. (C) COMMENT: THE PORTUGUESE MFA PROBABLY DOES NOT VIEW THE LATEST CONGRESSIONAL LETTER AS HELPFUL IN ACHIEVING A SOLUTION TO THE EAST TIMOR PROBLEM AND THUS WILL NOT COMMENT. THE MFA, HOWEVER, WILL BE

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LOOKING CLOSELY AT ANY INDONESIAN STATEMENTS ON EAST
TIMOR THAT MAY EMERGE AS A RESULT OF SECRETARY
SHULTZ'S VISIT THERE.
FLANIGAN
END OF MESSAGE

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